Three Months of Plattsburg Justifies America's Great Military Experiment

Citizen Soldiers Will Be Safe Behind The Men Who Graduate This Week From Abbreviated West Point

months ago fifty-eight hundred men emulated. These, too, are particulars came to Plattsburg to give themselves which should be included in the exup to a military experiment-a daring planation of why the officers' training military experiment conducted on a camp is an experiment no longer. grand scale, different from anything But it must be borne in mind that ever attempted in the United States, the graduates of this camp, and of They came here to test the theory that other officers' camps throughout the army officer material can be selected country, are not finished army officersand trained, if not completely, at least excepting, of course, in the cases where enough to give a man a flying start at the game, in ninety days.

Would it work?

"Who can tell?" said Major Merch B. Stewart, of the General Staff, when the question was put to him in May. Yet Major Stewart is one of the tactical and technical experts of the army, an early proponent of the Plattsburg idea and the senior instructor and part auther of the training curriculum followed at this end and other officers' instruction camps.

No one could tell. The officers' short course in America, an unmilitary country, had never been tried. Military Europe made its acquaintance in the first year of the war, it is true, and the results were short of what was expected and desired. But here it was X-the unknown quantity.

Even the most earnest and friendly advocates of the enterprise, officers like Major Stewart who were on the "inside" from the start, confesed the outcome a matter of speculation. There were others-army men of vast experience and understanding-who had doubts, honest, open, well-defined doubts, as to what the result would be.

The camp ends Tuesday and the experiment is over. Did it work? It did-and with success that its most optimistic sponsors never contem-

Plattsburg a Success

"A success? Plattsburg a success?" remarked Lieutenant Colonel Paul A. Wolf, the camp commandant. "Why, I would rather command a regiment officered by these men than a regiment of regulars!"

Now, that is considerable assertion. It is a remarkable assertion, in fact, but when asked if he really meant it, Colonel Wolf repeated the statementwith emphasis. Wolf is a regular, an oldtime regular of the battle-tried school and a West Pointer steeped in every tradition of that great academy. During the early days of the camp there used to be a saying among the newspaper correspondents up here who saw the colonel every day that Wolf an enemy. believed in the Divine Right of West Point; it could do nothing wrong and candidates have had the benefit of no place else could do anything quite previous military experience of an ex-

but just the same the colonel has lived make them: potential commanders in

great deal. Take the old non-com and put him in training for a commission, and he is apt to be hampered by the hidebound practices he learned in the ranks. Tell him to do a certain thing a certain way, and because it was done differently in the 47th or some other regiment, he is likely to become confused.

"But there was a summary of the property o

MAKING OFFICERS "FIT" AT PLATTSBURG TRAINING CAMP



SCALING A WALL

Few Who Missed Commissions Take Their Medicine Like Men-"It Was a Great Adventure," the Universal Verdict

a hostile patrol would be sighted, and Only fifty-four were graduated a hostile patrol would call for a new tactical disposition of the advance guard. successfully than the War Department The regular army instructor wowld halt anticipated. We counted on they The regular army institutes and forty-five men from each company, the company, explain the situation and then call out:

"Candidate Smith, take charge of the per cent," advance guard."

Smith would step from the ranks, trade places with Brown and give the trade places with Brown and give the sioned from officers' training cannot be stored from officers' training cannot be stored from officers' training cannot be stored from officers three mouths' necessary commands for dealing with after three months' service will as the hostile patrol. Then another prob-lem would arise, and another candidate have been years to the would be called to command the com-

Throwing hand grenades.

In "No Man's Land"

pany and take it out on the road. There dred and sixty-five entered in my dan

25 per cent. We got more than a The unexpected number that he

won commissions has created a sta tion by which reserve officers commispresent plan is to assign a colone tenants of regulars to each Nation Army regiment. The other officers, is cluding two majors, will be from a reserve corps. It is figured that about 1,000 regular army captains will be the outranked.

Whether he received a commission not, no man regrets having come a this camp. It has been a great adverure, a great experience. It has been something life would have been incomplete without. If the war were to me to-morrow it has been worth the tine

to-morrow it has been worth the time, the money, the energy sacrificed it you don't believe it, ask any candder friend of yours when he gets here. He will tell you these three ments have been worth worlds to him has given him a viewpoint and as attitude of mind to be gained newhere else, it has given him qualities has will stay with him through life are help him when he leaves the arm; a matter what his calling. There is not ing that teaches a man the invalual lesson of discipline and right ling, nothing that strengthens character as so reveals a man to himself, as he so reveals a man to himself, as the army. Ask the man who has been then Perhaps nothing that can be detected illustrates what Plattsburg be done for the raw civilians who are here in May and have had the pluce stick it through, than the manner has the which the losers have accepted the lot. They took their medicine is gentlemen. Not a complaint, and whisper of unfair treatment at the complaint of the state of the state

called to take charge of his fellows and didn't have the right chance." tell them what to do. Unless a man "How'd you come out, Tom?" great a candidate, passing a comrade or the word that was said and every move that parade ground.

Certain of Next Camp.

eedingly embarrassing position.

It was a trick of one or two inructors to call on the second of t It was a trick of one or two in-structors to call on any man not pay-but I've been designated for the ar

was tartick of one or two instructors to call on any man not paying attention to business. The result was that before long everybody was on his toes all the time, which in some respects makes this method superior to the old system, where one man has to do virtually all of the thinking and the others can march along and take in the scenery.

At such a pace as this some were bound to fall out and succumb to those "staggering doses." The maximum strength of the camp was 5,800. Now 4,400 remain. The losses have been about equal between the New York and New England contingent. Of this number about 3,200 receive commissions of one kind or another in the Regular and National armies.

On August 1 the instructors were able to set apart the fit from the unfit, to determine those who had proven themselves capable of the responsibilities of officers of the line. A most minute record had been kept of the performance of every man, showing his progress day by day and almost hour by hour from the time he entered camp. Guided by these remarkable three-months biographies, each company commander prepared and submitted to headquarters a roster of the men who stood highest. Colonel Wolf forwarded these lists to Washington for formal approval by the War Department.

Well, I didn't quite come thum, "Going?"

"Going?"

"Sure. A couple weeks homs to memp."

"Going?"

"Sure. A couple weeks homs to memp."

"Going?"

"Sure. A couple weeks homs to memp."

"Sure. A couple weeks hom

It is a versified symposium to with every man in the camp has been invise to contribute and to which haven have. Here is a jingle by J. L. Fals and Leonard Davidow, of the 24 No York Company, which may be sung the air of "Solomon Levi": For ten days—until yesterday—the camp groped in the "No Man's Land" of doubt. "Where do I stand?" was the eternal question on every lip and in every mind. The suspense was ended Friday. On Wednesday the approved lists were returned by the War Department. Yesterday, while civilians were carefully excluded from ear shot, each organization was formed in its company street while the company com-Oh, Willie Jones's fend mamma brought his